

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON**

IN THE MATTER OF:

RESOLUTION NO. 21-332

ISSUE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) LEWIS COUNTY SEEKS PROPOSALS FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL PROVIDE AFFORDABLE, EQUITABLE, HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND ACCESS IN LEWIS COUNTY

WHEREAS, the Lewis County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) adopted "Vision 2025," a Strategic Plan for the county identifying five main Directives, including initiatives to expand access to reliable, high-speed internet across the County and address the digital divide; and

WHEREAS, Lewis County has experienced significant growth over the years. However, the County faces challenges that impede continued economic growth and business recruitment. The most impactful of these challenges includes a lack of reliable high-speed internet, which continues to be a major hurdle for many residents during the COVID-19 pandemic and associated shutdowns of schools and businesses; and

WHEREAS, Lewis County is the largest county in western Washington; it covers 2,452 square miles, is rectangular in shape, and measures about 90 miles (east to west) by 25 miles (north to south). The elevation in Lewis County varies widely. The broad, relatively flat and low-lying western section of the county gives way to the rugged Cascade Mountains in the east, creating a challenging landscape for a cost-effective approach to broadband access to all Lewis County residents; and

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021 appropriated \$130.2 billion to remain available through December 31, 2024, for payments to metropolitan cities, non-entitlement units of local government; \$65.1 billion of this appropriation was reserved to make payments directly to counties based on their population and to mitigate the fiscal effects of the COVID-19 emergency including necessary investments in broadband infrastructure. The Plan also appropriated \$10 billion for payments to States, territories, and Tribal governments to carry out critical capital projects. Each state will receive a minimum of \$100 million with the remaining \$4.8 billion allocated to states based on population, rural population and household poverty; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Treasury oversees the funding allocations and rules associated with the American Rescue Plan. The Interim Final Rule outlines guidance for use on broadband infrastructure as the following:

- Prioritize investments in fiber optic infrastructure where feasible.
- Avoid investing in locations with existing agreements to build reliable wireline service with minimum speeds of 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload by December 31, 2024.
- Focus on projects that deliver a physical broadband connection by prioritizing projects that achieve last-mile connections.
- Consider ways to integrate affordability options into program design.
- Use strong labor standards, including project labor agreements and community benefits agreements that offer wages at or above the prevailing rate and include local hire provisions

WHEREAS, the BOCC has requested an RFP process to evaluate broadband options in order to address the underserved and unserved areas of the county, leveraging ARPA funds available through the county, state and federal agencies.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the BOCC requests proposals to fill broadband gaps and directs the County Manager to prepare a request for proposals (RFP), evaluate responses, provide recommendations to the BOCC, and negotiate a contract; and the Clerk of the Lewis County BOCC is instructed to proceed with all appropriate and necessary notifications, posting and publication as required.

DONE IN OPEN SESSION this 21st day of September, 2021.

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
Jonathan Meyer, Prosecuting Attorney

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
LEWIS COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Andrew Logerwell
By: Andrew Logerwell,
Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Absent
Gary Stamper, Chair

ATTEST:



Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM
Lindsey R. Pollock, DVM, Vice Chair

Rieva Lester
Rieva Lester,
Clerk of the Lewis County Board of
County Commissioners

Sean D. Swope
Sean D. Swope, Commissioner